

Iron County News.

VOL. I.

CEDAR CITY, UTAH, JANUARY 3, 1891.

NO. 6

ALLEN GRAY;

The Mystery of Turkey's Point.

Being a Few Romantic Chapters
From the Life of a Country
Editor.

BY JOHN R. MURKIN.
AUTHOR OF "WALTER BROWNFIELD," "HIS
LAWMAN," "BANKER OF BEDFORD,"
AND OTHER STORIES.

(Copyrighted, 1890, by the A. N. Kellogg News-
paper Company.)

"MR. EDITOR: Not having seen any thing from Billy's Creek lately I thought I would write a few lines for you. Times are good here. Crops are splendid, and farmers are doing well. I have just sold my horse and broken his arm last week. Jim Jones took me to Stivers to meet him last week. We have met again at the school house. Sam Harris was heard again the other day, because some fellow had his ox yoked. Sam had better bring back the corn knife he borrowed from me last week, when I wasn't at home. Had a dance last week at Bart Davies house. Sol Smith was there, he was so tall he bumped his head against the light. He had so much corn juice he made the floor crack. It is a wonder."

"Who wrote this?" asked Allen.
"I did—won't it do?"
"I guess so, if it is not so personal as to give offense to any one."

"Oh no, no, it's just all a joke, that's all."

"Are you a subscriber for the paper?"

"No; how much is it? If you'll put that piece in, I believe I'll sign for it."

"It is one dollar and fifty cents per annum."

"But how much is it for a year?"

"One dollar and fifty cents."

The citizen from Billy's Creek had only fifty cents, but he promised to bring in the balance next time he came, and a country editor very seldom refuses credit, especially when he gets one-third cash.

The countryman was gone, and Allen was staring, by toll, to drive away the sweet, and image of that beautiful face which had made such a wonderful impression on him, when the door opened, and this time it was the ambitious politician, Tom Simmons, who entered. No thunder-cloud was ever darker than Simmons' countenance.

"Be seated, Mr. Simmons," said the editor, calmly and politely.

"No, sir; I don't want to set down," growled the politician, rudely snatching some stereotyped advertising matter from a table near.

Very well knowing that a storm was coming, Allen determined to meet it boldly, and continued writing away at his desk.

"There's something I want to say to you," said the politician, in a voice somewhat husky.

"What is it, Mr. Simmons?" He did not look up, but spoke in a manner as if he were discussing some ordinary matter, and knew nothing of the explosion which was at his back. He was conscious of this, and the total indifference of the editor was somewhat embarrassing to the angry politician.

Mr. Simmons cleared his throat, and bracing his nerves for the terrible ordeal, in a voice still more husky, said:

"I'm satisfied now that you are playing no tricks."

"Then you don't believe what I say on the matter?"

"No, I don't."

Allen retained his temper, and as coolly as if he were merely taking down items of news, continued to write. He was very busy. After a few moments he said:

"Do you accuse me of treachery?"

"Yes, I do. You promised me to stand by me for the Legislature, and the minute I'm away from here, there comes that infernal, strong, and you are a conniver and a traitor, and no one knows what in the world you're up to, only I know you're acting up some kind of a job on me. You're playing off on me, and I know it."

The editor made no answer, but wrote steadily on until he had finished, and then coolly pressed his blotter upon his paper. Taking up the document he had just written, he read:

"I, Thomas Simmons, hereby agree to become a candidate for the office of Representative of this county in the next General Assembly for the State of Missouri, at the coming election, and hereby declare that I will be a candidate for no other office at said election, at which time the editor of the *Iron County News*, by aid of his paper, shall support me as a candidate for said office. And should Allen Gray, the said editor, support me and I fail to be elected, I hereby agree to forfeit and pay to said Gray the sum of one thousand dollars, and in consideration of this agreement should the said Gray fail and refuse to give me his aid and support, at the time and in the manner aforesaid, he forfeits and is to pay to myself, Thomas Simmons, the just and true sum of one thousand dollars. In case of either forfeiture aforesaid, the amount so forfeited may be sued upon and collected out of our good and honest in any court of law in this State having jurisdiction over the same. In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals."

This was a very legal, looking document; to Tom Simmons and Allen his son, with a right. Once have it executed and he would have his money, Strong, on the hip. He was very anxious to sign it at once, but Allen insisted on it being executed in duplicate, and when this was done, and he had a copy in his pocket he was considerably relieved.

"Are you satisfied now, Mr. Simmons?"

"Yes."

"Well, I am very busy. Good morning."

Simmons left the office.

CHAPTER X.
A STRANGE VISIT.

"Be you the editor?"

It was a weazen-faced little old man with a frosty beard on his chin, and weak, watery eyes, who looked in at the door of his sanctum. His dress was the home-spun of a farmer, and his hat-brim was tacked up on one side.

"Yes, sir, I am," Allen answered.

"My gal scratched off this little piece, and I thought as may be you'd like it."

The little old man timidly entered the office and handed the editor a neatly-folded bit of paper. Allen was astounded to find it rolled. Unfolding the paper, he found written in a plain, legible hand some news items of the neighborhood.

"The article is very good, sir. I will use it."

"D'ye think that gal can write?" the old man asked, somewhat anxiously.

"Yes, sir; she lacks cultivation, but she will acquire that."

The old man smiled, and said:

"She ain't got no learnin' to mount to any thing, but she likes writin' monstrous well, and studies hard to get her pieces right. Ef ye think she'd ever make a writer, I'd send that ar gal to skule."

"She has good, strong common sense; her article shows it. How old is she?"

"Only fourteen."

"So young, and yet do her work so well! If she has proper cultivation and perseverance she may make her mark in the world. Do you take the paper?"

"Oh, yes; I subscribed when ye first commenced it."

"Tell your daughter that I will always be glad to have any thing from her pen, and as soon as I am able to do so, will pay her for her contributions."

"Much obliged to ye, Mr. Editor. I'll tell her, and Sarah'll be right down glad to know it, for she's mighty set on writin'."

"The old man, as he left the office, said:

"There is true genius in a log cabin," said Allen, gazing at the manuscript.

"There is modesty associated with it. What a contrast between the modest little country girl, and the ambitious Miss Hopkins or Toney Barnes. For her there is a bright future, for them nothing but envy, jealousy and grumbling at hard-boasted editors. But who would have thought that so many people were turning their attention to literature and journalism. I supposed them to be avocations which were demanding followers, but instead, the professions are overcrowded. It seems as if the whole world was going into literature. People living in the most remote parts of the earth seem to have caught the mania to write."

Allen had read several of his productions that were superior to the ravens on those grounds. In fact, all of Mr. Barnes' poetic effusions were difficult to solution.

"Just let me read this to you," said Toney.

"I am very busy—leave it."

"No, no, no; it's not long, and I will read fast."

"Go ahead, then."

Toney read:

"Once in a deep, dark, lonely swamp, awaiting, all alone,

While the dew of even damp lay upon the stone—

"Did the dew lay only upon the stones?" the editor asked.

"Oh, no—wait and you will see how it all comes out," and he continued:

"The night was dark, the dew was down, and all around me

Ten thousand feet of whirling hold—

Ten thousand feet of whirling hold—

Alone I searched the forest floor, Alone I searched the forest floor,

When sudden my hand fell on a cry Proceeding from some wandering child.

"For hours I searched vainly on, For hours I searched the forest round,

When, lo! a horrid ghost arose bleeding from the ground,

Its head was cypress, hair on fire, Blood dripping from the sockets down.

On this horrid thing I cast a glance, And then fell senseless to the ground."

"Now, sir," cried Toney, triumphantly, "can you tell me what's in that poem?"

"No, sir. I give it up, but I think there's a man living that can. Allen hesitatingly answered:

"That speaks well for it," said Toney, with a wild, scolding laugh. "That poem will give the wealth and fame. How much will you give me for it?"

"As present, I do not feel able to buy it," said Allen, "but I might make a big profit on it."

"Yes, but I am not able to purchase it."

"Who do you think could?"

"The Harpers might."

"I'll send it to them by the very next mail," said Toney, quite enthusiastically.

Allen never knew what the fate of this weird miniature poem was. Though he has been a constant reader of Harper's periodical, from that day down to the present, he has never seen it in any of them.

Next day the editor was hard at work in his office when Mr. Strong entered. That look of distrust and uneasiness on Mr. Strong's face was deepening.

"Well, Gray, they ar' talkin' some hard yarns on ye," said Mr. Strong, leaning on the back of a chair.

"What do they tell?" Allen asked.

"They say as how you gave back on me, and tried to support Tom Simmons."

"Who told you, Mr. Strong?"

"Lots o' people."

Allen was writing. He stopped long

enough, however, to say that some of people were either mistaken or knowingly perverting the truth, and then continued to write.

"I tell ye, if I like, I'll put Tom Simmons off the track. I'll be the next sheriff—ye ar' yer own."

"Do ye think Tom Simmons is a candidate for sheriff?"

"O course, I do."

"I don't believe it."

"I know it," said Mr. Strong, hotly. "If he isn't a candidate, why is he leavin' 'em out here all the time, an' why is he always leavin' me on the street?"

"I know now that he will not be your opponent," but you seem to be again troubled with doubts as to my sincerity in supporting you."

"Well, Mister Gray, I must say that's something kinder queer if ye actions, that's all. You ar' that ar' feller ar' allers excitin' together for somethin'."

"Now Mr. Strong I am going to do what I would under no ordinary circumstances begin to do. If you will enter into an agreement with a forer of one thousand dollars to run for sheriff, I will enter into a bond in the sum of one thousand dollars to support you."

Mr. Strong at once saw that he had every thing on his side. He intended to run for sheriff without any contract or obligation, and by this on—swore: he was sure he would have the editor safe and be sure to beat the man who he despised. Allen had prepared an article somewhat similar to that which Simmons had signed and now presented it to Strong for his signature.

Mr. Strong was delighted to sign it and left the office chuckling at the assurance that he had for once proved too shrewd for Simmons.

Allen bowed his head in his hands and his thought reverted as they invariably did, when not pressed with politicians or poets, to that beautiful being in the mysterious old rock house. Ever before him, as if gazing from out some mist-like cloud, seemed to appear that sad and bewitching face in such mute appeal, that his heart was always heavy. Those sad blue eyes seemed always gazing fondly into his.

"Oh, Bertha, Bertha, how is all this to end?" he gasped.

"Copy," cried Toney, at the sanctum door.

The demand brought him back to the stern realities of life, and he set to work, driving his pencil at a furious rate, dashed off something and handed it in.

"A man in my frame of mind is not fit to edit a paper."

Before his mind had time to again revert to the painful subject on which it seemed to love to dwell, the door opened and a broad-shouldered countryman stalked unbidden into the room. Allen looked up, and before him stood a towering giant, whose face was dark with wrath.

"Are you the feller who runs this shabaz?" the modern Hercules demanded.

"I am."

"Then take that for a moddlesome liar," cried the stranger, aiming a blow at Allen, which he successfully parried. The editor now thanked his stars that in his more youthful days he had not neglected the manly art of boxing. Though no match in strength for this rural giant, his skill made him more than his equal.

For several moments Allen had all he could do to parry those six-inch hammer blows, which fell thick and fast upon him. But at last he got in a well-directed blow from the shoulder, which staggered the stranger. This gave him a decided advantage over his antagonist. In a minute a time the stranger was down in one corner of the office, yelling murder, while the man whom he had assaulted was laboring him with telling blows.

The Hatcher ran into the sanctum, and, assisted by Toney, got the men separated.

"What does this mean?" he asked.

Allen answering that he did not know, the stranger struggled to his feet, growling.

"I know. What did ye put that piece in the paper about me fur?"

"What piece? I have no recollection of having ever seen you until now," answered Allen.

"But ye lied about me. Ye said I stole a corn-knife, an' I wasn't agoin' to stand it. It was George Leeper who set ye on me."

As soon as the editor could be made to understand what particular article had given offense, he explained that Leeper had assured him that the whole thing was a harmless joke.

"Harmless joke, thunderation!" growled Horrin, wiping the blood from his face. "Accuse a feller o' stealin', an' then say it's all a harmless joke!"

Allen, realizing that he had wounded the feelings as well as the head of the countryman, promised a scathing retraction in the next issue, and while he was still smarting under the misrepresentation made by Leeper, sat down and wrote the article. It was much stronger in its denunciation of Leeper than he would have written had he

given the matter a sober second thought, but he landed it to Leo, who put it in type, without further consideration, to read and publish the paper would give the man he hated.

Allen had allowed himself to get considerably behind with his work, and he sat at his desk late that night, long after the printers had gone home.

His lamp burned dimly, and he found those superstitious horrors with more than usual force creeping over him. He fought against the terrible feeling, but all in vain. He grew nervous and started at the slightest sound.

When he heard a timid knock at the door his heart thumped wildly. He rose to his feet and, trembling violently in every limb, went to the door and opened it. Before him stood a woman.

She entered quickly, closing the door after her, and, her veil thrown aside, revealed the white face of Bertha, the strange girl of the mysterious house on the hill.

CHAPTER XI.
A STRANGE REQUEST.

For a moment Allen Gray stood dumb with amazement. He could hardly believe himself awake, and passed his hand over his face as if to brush away the vision. When he looked again, pale and beautiful as ever, Bertha still stood before him. Those dark blue eyes seemed to have increased in their

melancholy levelness, and never was there a face more angelic than the one that met his astounded gaze.

"Be seated," he at last said, in a voice but little above a whisper, placing a chair for her.

"You must think I am completely cured," said M. C. Amesbury, Blockport, Me., as he suffered for

as to the cause of your visit. I hope, however, that I may be able to be of service to you in some way."

She cast a frightened glance toward the door, and then, with her white, scared face close to his, her great blue eyes seeming to pierce his soul, she said:

"I know I could depend on you, Mr. Gray. This world, which I once thought so good and kind, has proved to be so full of deceit and treachery that I had almost decided never to trust another fellow being. But you seem honest, manly and generous. You will not betray me, will you? Oh, promise me you will never betray me!"

Those beautiful eyes became flooded with silent tears, while her pathetic, beseeching manner would have touched a much harder heart than Allen's.

"I will never betray you—I swear I never will!" he answered, with unmistakable earnestness.

A silence fell upon both. The beautiful visitor nervously started at the slightest sound, while Allen, having partially regained his composure, sat gazing at her in astonished embarrassment.

The beauty and mystery which ever hovered over the girl seemed to have increased, and Allen's perplexity had grown greater with them. Like a panorama the events of the past few weeks in which she had so conspicuously figured seemed to pass before him. Again he saw the mysterious chateau on the hill, and heard anew the strange wall of stories which were wont to frighten the children and make the old people shake their heads with doubtful misgivings. Once more the sunlight fell on the deserted turnpike which led to the great house, and he was wandering along from the beautiful spring and the rustic old seat to the plateau above. In an instant the scene had changed and he was on the great bluff overlooking the river, with this beautiful being at his side. The recollections of the happy moment when two loving souls first met in ever sweet to the memory. Then, again, on that dark, wild night, when they so strangely met in the garden. Her face was scarcely less white than on that occasion.

Could it be possible that that beautiful being—who had seemed as far removed from him as the stars were in his presence—sat before him alone? Was she on the eve of disclosing the terrible mystery which, like a pall, enshrouded her? Fate seemed to have worked a similar destiny for them, and despite all they might do their paths would tend to the same direction. No wonder Allen Gray's heart beat violently. A few moments more might see him the happiest man living, or the most miserable. A great crisis was coming, and it is no wonder that he trembled at its approach.

It was her place to speak and he could only sit and gaze ather. Her white face, however, was troubled, and that iron resolve which had supported her in this untimely, and seemingly unladylike, call was evidently about to fail her in her hour of need. Allen at last realized that unless she was encouraged she might not reveal the purpose of this visit, and with all his sympathetic soul in his face, he said:

"Have no fears, Bertha, for by all I hold sacred, I swear that I will prove a brother to you in distress."

Continued next week

lashed Bertha; she was a loyal heart on whom she could confide. In this editor's flashing eye was manliness and truth; she would trust once more. Scarce could she restrain her natural inclination to fly to his arms for refuge from the relentless enemies who pursued. She could not have found stronger or more willing arms to defend her.

Having partially regained her composure, she said:

"I believe you; had I not unbounded faith in your honor and courage I should never have run the great risk I do in coming here."

"Then it is a risk!"

"A greater risk than you can imagine. Should I be discovered here it would be fatal to my plans—plans which are more than life to me."

What were the plans to which she alluded? Doubtless some request—some simple service she wished him to perform for her. Knowing that one so pure and noble as she could not make an evil request, he resolved to do her bidding.

"Have no fears to speak boldly to me," said Allen. "Your wishes, if in my power, shall be granted."

"Can you leave the village?" she asked.

Starting in amazement, the astonished editor gazed at her for a moment, repeating:

"Leave the village?"

"I mean only temporarily—for two or three days at the longest."

"Yes, yes, I can—and I will if it is necessary."

"It is necessary. Some one must go, and I can trust no one but yourself."

"Where do you wish me to go?"

"Do you know where the French settlement or French town is?"

"I have heard of it, and can find it very easily. It is about fifty miles down the river."

"Yes, sir; it is fully that far," the girl answered, gathering up the folds of her apron in her embarrassment and with nervous fingers folding them down into little plaits.

"What am I to do when I get there?" Allen asked.

"You are to go to the house of Madame Camille," said the girl, hesitating to make her request fully known.

"Am I to take a message to her?" asked Allen.

"You are to take a child," said the girl, slowly turning her great blue eyes upon him.

Amazement, wonder and curiosity were raging like so many fires in Allen's breast. "A child?" he gasped.

"Yes, sir; a little boy as young as you."

"How can I do that?"

Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, which has cured her, a neighbor, Mrs. Glenn, had the cough was relieved by Pectoral. I

leading this

In his helplessness

himself what this

the French settlement

of kidnapping for secretly

task! While all these

were surging like a tempest

he vividly recalled the

Harpers a few weeks before. Tom

ing his head in his

"Never trust yourself in the power

those people. I tell you the whole family

is blighted by a curse. No good ever comes to any one who has any thing to do with 'em.

If you ever befriended one of 'em in any way you'll regret it the longest day you live.

They're a blighting curse to anybody who has any thing whatever to do with 'em."

Somehow the young editor could not help asking himself if he had fallen under this blighting curse. Was he to be only one more victim to the strange mystery of Turkey's Point? Then his eyes fell upon the pale, sweet face of the anxious girl, and he knew she was no alien, charming him to destruction. With determination in his voice he said:

"If you say for me to go to-night I will go."

The girl, during the moment's silence had been sitting, her face burning with eagerness, now grew brighter as she returned:

"It must be to-night, Mr. Gray; to-morrow will be too late."

"How am I to go, by the river?"

"No, on horseback."

"I do not know that I can get a horse."

"One will be furnished you."

Then another short silence ensued. She seemed waiting to gather up her thoughts. From her breathless exhaustion it was evident that she had come very rapidly to the great house to the village.

Her agitation became less as she

erod from her exertion, and now she almost as much composed as she had been. Gazing at him with intense eagerness, she began giving her instructions.

"As soon as I am gone," she said, in a clear, steady voice, "go to the spring where you found the cocked. There you will find a horse saddled and equipped, tied to a tree just back of the old rustic seat. He is the best rider in the whole country, and will carry you safely to the end of your journey without stopping. The poor child is dear, and dumb, but he is very patient, and will give you little or no trouble. Allen was disappointed to learn of the child's affliction, for some how he thought the little prattler would, on this long, lonely ride, unravel to him some of the mystery of the stone house on the hill.

"Where will I find the child?" he asked.

"Until the horse and bring him back to the road which leads up to the stone house on the hill, and there will be an old negro woman waiting for you with the child. When she gives it to you, lose no time in your flight. Do not think this an easy task; you are undertaking, Mr. Gray, or that it is unattended with danger. There is danger of which you can have no knowledge. The journey is hazardous, and may cost you your

